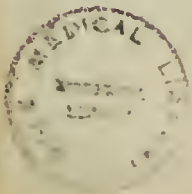


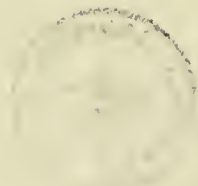
REPORT  
OF THE  
COMMISSIONER  
OF THE  
FUND FOR THE INSANE  
TO THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
MAY SESSION, 1855.

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# REPORT.

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*To the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, now  
in session :*

HAVING in the month of March of the present year, visited the Retreat for the Insane as Commissioner of the Fund, I deem it my duty to submit to your consideration the following Report.

It appears from documents with which I have been furnished, that during the year ending March 31, 1855, the whole number of insane persons in the Retreat, who received aid from the State, was :

Males,	59
Females,	92
<hr/>	
Total,	151

Of these there have been discharged :

Removed,	33
Improved,	14
Not improved,	18
Died,	6
<hr/>	
Total,	71

There remain in the Retreat :

Males,	29
Females,	51
<hr/>	
Total,	80
<hr/>	
	151

Thus it appears, that 151 poor lunatics during the past year, have, through the liberality of the State, enjoyed the benefit of this benevolent institution, most of whom would probably, otherwise, have been deprived of this privilege.

Of these, thirty-three have been restored to soundness of mind, and fourteen more have been more or less improved. Probably an increased number of applications have been made in consequence of the scarcity of money and the want of employment, which have rendered the friends of the insane less able to relieve them than they would have been under ordinary circumstances. I have therefore regarded it, both as a privilege and a means of carrying into effect the benevolent wishes of the people of the State, to make liberal drafts on the Fund which the Legislature have set apart for the aid of this most unfortunate class of our fellow-citizens.

The visit to which I have referred gave me the highest satisfaction. The merits of the Institution and of the Officers who have the charge of it, can not be properly appreciated without a personal examination. The Superintendent and his assistants furnished me with every facility for becoming acquainted with every particular regarding the Institution and its management. I found everything in perfect order. Neatness and regularity everywhere prevail, and nothing is omitted which would promote comfort, cheerfulness and improvement. The arrangements for cooking, washing and ironing, could not easily be excelled.

My attention was particularly directed to a new building, or lodge, which has been completed during the past year, which is intended especially to provide accommodations for the worst cases of insanity. The want of such a building had for a long time been severely felt. Some of these maniacs occasionally get beyond the control of their attendants, strip themselves of their clothing, become extremely filthy in their habits, and endanger the lives of all who approach them.—Humanity requires that such wretched objects should be secluded from view, kept warm and comfortable, and deprived of the power of injuring themselves, or others, without being subject to some kind of restraining apparatus. Until this

Lodge was built, this could not be done at the Retreat. Now, a spacious hall and a suit of rooms have been provided, admirably adapted for such a purpose. By means of a furnace, the air in each room can be kept at any required temperature. Warm and cold baths are provided. By an ingenious plan of ventilation, all the foul air and unpleasant effluvia may be instantly removed, from any of these rooms, without affecting its temperature. Food and other necessities can be supplied to the occupant, without exposing the person delivering them to an attack. The rooms, in my judgment, are not larger, nor their construction more expensive, than was necessary. A similar Lodge at the other extremity of the main building, for males, is imperiously demanded.

At my late visit, I was in the evening introduced into what I could easily have mistaken for a large, genteel party. Music and dancing formed a part of the entertainment, and few visitors, unless admitted into the secret, would have suspected, that many of the performers, as well as the greater part of the company present, were lunatics. This, as well as many other modes of treatment, accounted to some extent, for the great influence which the Superintendent and his assistants, exert upon the minds of the patients. Natural instincts exist in them, probably, to the same extent as in the sane. They are equally susceptible of the emotions of love, esteem and gratitude. Skill in treatment consists, to a great extent, in knowing how to excite these feelings, and in making use of them, in bringing back to their former position, those faculties of the mind which have been distorted and misdirected by insanity.

Insanity generally manifests itself by the undue predominance of some one particular train of thought. It is interesting to observe, how at this Institution, by such entertainments as I have described, by turning the attention of the patients to reading, by giving them employment in light labor, by allowing them opportunities to ride abroad, and by inducing them to walk in the delightful grounds attached to the buildings, their minds are diverted and their harassing trains of thought are broken up.

After witnessing the varied displays of skill and judgment which were manifested, I was not surprised at the success which has crowned the unwearied efforts of the Superintendent and his assistants. It must be painful and irksome to any one, to have constantly before his eyes the most deplorable and affecting calamity which ever befalls the human race, and those who are willing to devote their lives to the relief of the sufferers, deserve our encouragement, support, and gratitude.

HENRY DUTTON,

COMMISSIONER OF THE FUND.

HARTFORD, May 3, 1855.

